

Appendix 2

Historic Project Background

1. As background and context to this report, Members may wish to review how this project has developed as it is now almost 7 years since Cabinet first received a report on the future of Tides Leisure Centre.
2. In September 2017 the Council appointed The Sports Consultancy in partnership with GT3 Architects, Faithful+Gould and Hadron Consulting to undertake an initial feasibility appraisal of options for delivering improvements at Tides Leisure Centre. The appraisal was intended to review the need for improvement of both wet side and health & fitness facilities by examining a range of options from refurbishment through to new build. In commissioning this study, the Council was acknowledging that with the progress then being made towards the completion of Dover District Leisure Centre project progresses focus was increasingly going to be drawn to the condition of Tides Leisure Centre.
3. This initial appraisal highlighted concerns regarding the Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) plant within the building leading to a decision between meetings (DPH04) being taken in April 2018 to allocate £50,000 of the Tides Refurbishment Provision included within the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the appointment of specialist consultants to develop an informed brief for potential contractors given concerns at the condition of some of the M&E plant.
4. In July 2018, Cabinet received a report on the appraisal and agreed that a further investigation be undertaken on two preferred options concerning the proposed Refurbishment and Extension of Tides Leisure Centre(i) creating enhanced leisure water and dry-side expansion and (ii) demolition and construction of new wet and dry facilities (excluding the sports hall and tennis centre).
5. In February 2020, Cabinet received a report on the outcome of the options appraisal study which has considered a range of options seeking to improve the facilities at Tides Leisure Centre. Members agreed the existing site was the preferred location to construct a new-build wet-side and health and fitness leisure centre. It also agreed a Project Advisory Group be established and that £500k was drawn down from the mid-term capital programme to enable the project to proceed into the next stages with an appointed lead consultant Faithful & Gould and other professional services required to support project delivery. The full report and appendices can be found at [Tides Leisure Centre Report.pdf \(dover.gov.uk\)](https://www.dover.gov.uk/tides-leisure-centre-report)
6. In March 2020, the project was paused due to the pandemic. Covid 19 significantly disrupted business, following central governments requirement to close leisure centres for several consecutive months on three occasions during March 2020 and April 2021. As the leisure industry began to recover and rebuild, further challenges arose from the war in Ukraine which caused utility costs to soar alongside the national recession that followed in the UK economy.
7. In July 2022 Cabinet received an update report considering the pandemic's impact on the leisure industry. Members considered additional options that ranged from no water pool provision to a varied range of water provision with health & fitness. It was agreed to further develop a project to construct a new build wet and health & fitness centre, using the allocation of £600,000 for Tides replacement capital project to support the next stages of delivery. It was also agreed to develop further a proposed Sustainable Strategy to help reduce carbon emissions & to appoint BAM Construction Ltd via a Direct Award under a

two-stage tender process, and the Working Project Budget of £24.88m was noted. The full report and appendices can be found at [Tides Leisure Centre Report](#).

8. In November 2023, Cabinet noted the findings from the RIBA Stage 2 detailed feasibility summary report and the challenges posed to the viability of the project by the wider economic climate. Members agreed to approve the additional spend of £20k from the existing Tides Replacement capital project to review the work undertaken to date and explore whether there are any solutions or sources of external funding that might provide a possible way forward for the project. The full report can be found at [Tides Leisure Centre Cabinet Report November 2023](#) and appendices at [Appendix 1](#), RESTRICTED Appendix 2 - RIBA Stage 2, Detailed Summary of Funding & Affordability, [Appendix 3](#)

9. At its meeting on 29 July 2024, Cabinet received a further report setting out the findings from alternative solutions to provide a possible way forward to deliver a new Deal Leisure Centre. This led to a more affordable design and delivery model being identified through working informally with a new delivery partner Alliance Leisure Services (ALS).

It was noted that ALS developed proposals with Pellikaan Construction over a three-month period. It was reported that the project capital cost of the Revised New Build scheme was estimated to be £19.2m (including DDC direct costs), a significant cost improvement to proposals previously reported to Members.

The business case considered principal assumptions & was based on funding and affordability calculations. A remaining capital funding deficit was reported, equating to £3.02m, equivalent to a revenue pressure of £167k per annum if additional borrowing is undertaken to finance the gap. While a considerable deficit remained, this option was significantly more viable, and Members agreed to proceed into the next stage of project development.

Having considered, the July 2024 report, Cabinet agreed

- a. To note options investigated to date and proceed with the proposed Alliance Leisure Services (ALS) Revised New Build Scheme.
- b. To authorise the Strategic Director (Place and Environment) to procure and contract to secure the professional services required to support the project and to appoint Alliance Leisure Services as delivery partner for the lifecycle of the project.
- c. To use £420,000 from the existing Tides Replacement Capital Project to support the next stage (RIBA Stage 2) of the project.
- d. That the Tides Leisure Centre Project Advisory Group be requested to review design options and consider the cost implications of increasing the lane provision from 5 to 6 and of adding leisure water provision to the proposed Alliance Leisure Services Revised New Build Scheme.

The full report and appendices can be found at [Tides Leisure Centre Cabinet July 2025](#)